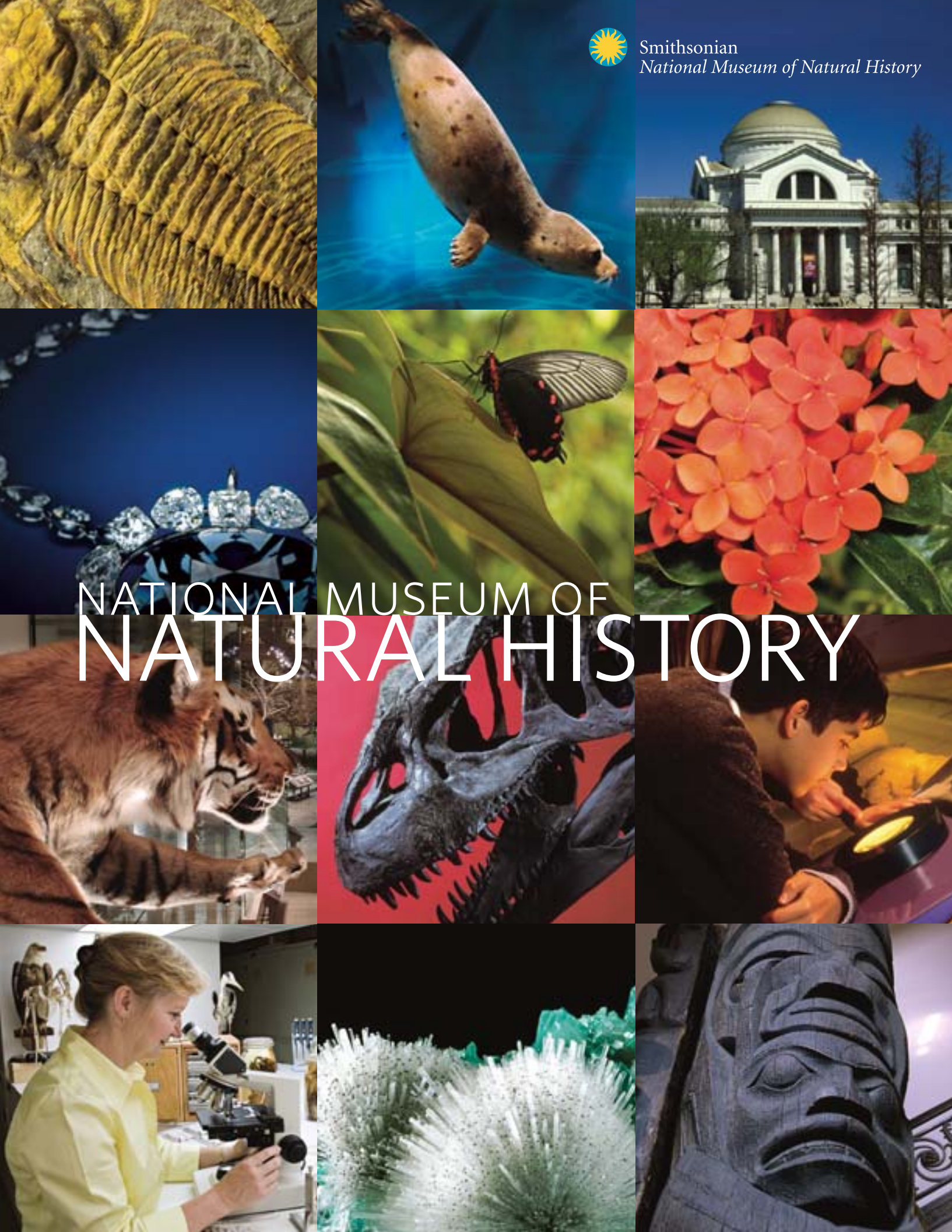
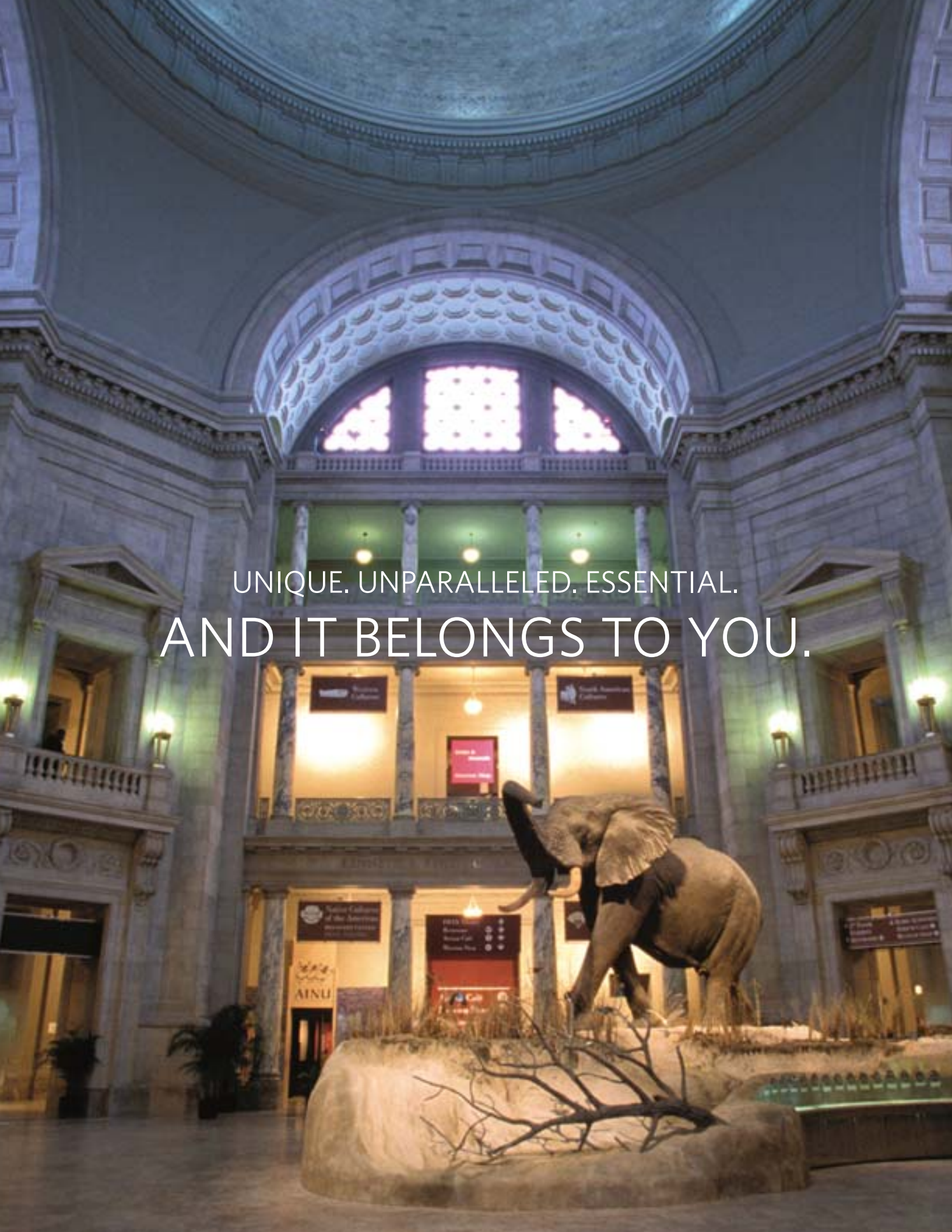

Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
NATURAL HISTORY



UNIQUE. UNPARALLELED. ESSENTIAL.

AND IT BELONGS TO YOU.

WHAT SETS THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY APART?

We interpret the diversity and showcase the beauty of the natural and cultural world for more visitors than any other museum on Earth. We awaken curiosity, stimulate learning, and encourage stewardship of the planet. And we generate the knowledge and tools to help preserve it. **UNIQUE ACCESS.** We are the nation's museum and caretaker to collections that belong to the world. Offering free and open access to all, we bring visitors face-to-face with artifacts and specimens that reveal nature's mysteries and tell the story of Earth's history and its varied cultures. We stand as one of the premier scientific resources on the globe. **UNPARALLELED DEPTH AND BREADTH.** With more than 126 million objects, our collections — the world's largest — are the bedrock on which our research agenda rests. And as part of the Smithsonian Institution, we draw on the people and holdings of the largest museum and research complex in the world. We are home to more than 100 scientists who preserve, augment, and study the record of life on Earth. We are part of a global scientific community, and we conduct research on every continent, forging international partnerships that promote discovery through shared knowledge. **ESSENTIAL IMPACT.** Our research contributes essential data across scientific disciplines, and our outcomes often improve lives. Our public programs convey the excitement of exploration and change the way people see — and behave toward — our environment. We educate and inspire the next generation — and those that will follow — to respect our common habitat, thus fulfilling a mission that, like the Museum, belongs to us all.

MAMMALS

THE KENNETH E. BEHRING FAMILY HALL OF MAMMALS

SANT OCEAN HALL

OCEAN

BUTTERLIES + PLANTS: PARTNERS IN EVOLUTION

EVOLUTION

EXHIBITIONS

EDUCATIONAL. ENLIGHTENING. ENTERTAINING.
From the sea creatures in the Sant Ocean Hall to the sparkling sapphires in the Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems, and Minerals, the Museum combines cultural artifacts and specimens with scholarship and innovative technology to tell the stories of the natural world and its peoples. Our exhibitions invite questions from — and provide answers to — millions of visitors each year.

Exhibitions are the National Museum of Natural History's public face. People who first visited as children return with their own children and grandchildren to share their favorite exhibits. Families who live close by return time and again and find exciting new glimpses of the natural world to ignite the imagination.

Responsive to our rapidly changing world, our exhibitions showcase the outcomes of our research, provoke discovery and inquiry, and encourage an appreciation of the natural and cultural processes that shape our world.

Exhibitions are the National Museum of Natural History's public face.

ENGAGING VISITORS IN PERSON AND ONLINE
Educators and curators bring exhibitions to life and encourage deeper exploration through engaging public programs that combine tours, lectures, film, music, and art.

For those who cannot visit in person, interactive Web sites, podcasts, and an emerging presence in new forms of social media enrich the exhibition experience for more than 40 million online visitors each year and allow unprecedented levels of access to the Museum's resources.

Dynamic and evolving, tangible and virtual, our exhibitions and public programs introduce the natural world and showcase its diverse splendors.

Responsive to our rapidly changing world, our exhibitions showcase the outcomes of our research, provoke discovery and inquiry...

DRAWN FROM NATURE'S PAST

Growing at the rate of approximately 250,000 objects a year, our collections include objects from the travels of world figures from President Theodore Roosevelt to naturalists Charles Darwin and John James Audubon. Legendary jeweler Harry Winston contributed an astounding array of gems, including the Hope Diamond. The namesake and founder of the Smithsonian, James Smithson, also contributed his own specimens to the original Museum collections.

Always expanding the collections, our researchers discover, identify, and describe artifacts and specimens that represent major branches of science. Our teams discover new species that then serve as a baseline against which to measure continuity and change. Even the oldest items, such as stardust that predates the Solar System, continue to yield secrets as each advance in technology offers new ways to examine and understand them.

Dynamic and ever-changing, the Museum's collections belong to the world...

INFORMING THE FUTURE OF THE PLANET

The National Collections record the diversity within and among species and cultures alike. Often the only remaining evidence of entire civilizations, our collections attest to the breadth of their achievements. A foundation of Museum work in all areas, they inform long-term scientific inquiry and help make life better in practical ways. Our collections help identify disease-carrying insects, uncover natural resources, and pinpoint plant species that resist drought and lead to new medicines.

Dynamic and ever-changing, the Museum's collections belong to the world and constitute a legacy of the Earth's past that we continually work to renew. They will pay dividends for centuries to come.

NEW ANSWERS TO OLD QUESTIONS

Using revolutionary DNA barcoding technology and the Museum's entomological collection, researchers at the National Museum of Natural History recently found that two common and widespread skipper butterfly species actually comprise a total of 14 different species. The Museum's entomological collection is the largest in the western hemisphere and provides invaluable comparative data for scientists around the world. "Skippers are one of the biggest families of butterflies," says John Burns, curator of Lepidoptera, "and the species are notoriously hard to identify." Ground-breaking barcoding studies of hundreds of specimens from a limited geographic area enabled the researchers to discover these new ecologically specialized skipper species. "Our results reflect a living world far more complex than expected," says Burns, "and they emphasize the need to conserve a variety of habitats in many different areas to protect Earth's biodiversity."

COLLECTIONS

RESEARCH

UNLOCKING NATURE'S SECRETS

How did the Earth form, and how is it changing today? How did life evolve over millions of years, and how does a new species fit into the tree of life? How diverse are human cultures, and what is the impact of globalization on our society?

All science begins with a question, which is tested through inquiry and data. The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History is first and foremost a scientific institution devoted to basic research, and we follow the path that discovery forges.

The natural world has shaped human evolution; in turn, humans continually change the natural world. Scientists race to understand the relationship between humankind and the planet as species disappear before our very eyes, even as estimates suggest millions more are yet to be identified. By investigating such questions as how the planet's environment is changing or why certain languages become endangered, we can enhance the lives of peoples — and cultures — around the world.

What is the impact of globalization on our society?

SUPPORTING A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF SCIENCE

Our research is grounded in three major themes: the formation and evolution of Earth and similar planets, the discovery and understanding of life's diversity, and the study of human diversity and culture change. Working closely with other branches of the Smithsonian and other scientific institutions, we conduct research around the world as well as in our collections. Hundreds of fellows, interns, and visiting scholars form a vigorous intellectual community that builds upon the work of past generations and prepares future generations of scientists.

INFORMING THE FUTURE BY STUDYING THE PAST

Rapid, human-induced changes in the global environment, especially climate, are the subject of intense investigation by the world's scientific community. "Our world is like a machine," says Scott Wing, a paleobotanist at the National Museum of Natural History. "We are pulling its levers, but we're not yet sure what they do." To better understand how this complex machine works, Museum scientists study plant fossils that date to a period of sudden global warming 55 million years ago known as the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM). "Our research shows that the PETM caused continental-scale shifts in the distribution of vegetation and other major ecological changes," says Wing. "Our data will yield greater understanding of the mechanisms of change and help us to understand the intricacies of the climate machine in order to better predict the future."

Working closely with other branches of the Smithsonian and other scientific institutions, we conduct research around the world.

IMPACT

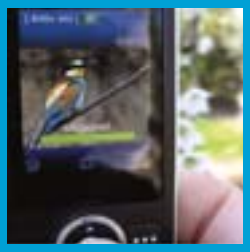
What starts as a small spark of discovery can blaze a path to a new field of study. Collaborative and cross-disciplinary, research at the National Museum of Natural History is conducted by our own scientists and their colleagues from institutions around the globe who often base their work on our collections. We go where science leads, and our findings often have tangible and practical effects on people's lives.

DEMYSTIFYING OUR WORLD

At once destructive and life-giving, volcanoes have fascinated and terrified humans from the dawn of earliest man to the present day. Volcanic eruptions create fertile soil and additional land mass but can also cause immense devastation, and many countries lack resources to adequately monitor their volcanoes. The National Museum of Natural History's Global Volcanism Program (GVP) seeks to demystify the volcanic process by documenting and analyzing the eruption history of the Earth's 1,500 active volcanoes, defined as those that have erupted at least once in the past 10,000 years. GVP creates online reports of current volcanic activity and documents eruptions, and its findings are used by a host of national and international partner agencies. "By understanding this force that shapes our world, we can hopefully contribute to preventing future disasters on the scale of Pompeii or Mount St. Helens," says GVP Director Lee Siebert.

ASSEMBLING AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LIFE

Sometimes the simplest ideas are the most powerful. Imagine that all we know about Earth's 1.8 million living species was instantly available through a single Web portal. Thanks to a global collaboration among the world's most prestigious institutions, that idea is becoming a reality. The Encyclopedia of Life (EOL) documents all named species of animals, plants, and other forms of life — even those that have just been discovered — and gathers them into a single, multi-media database. The Smithsonian is home to the project, whose universally accessible data can serve as the ultimate field guide for curious naturalists, generate educational materials for schools and universities, and further scientific analysis and synthesis. "Because EOL is online, it will be ever-changing, constantly updated information on all known species," says James Edwards, EOL's Executive Director. "This effort will increase our appreciation for the planet's bio-diversity and how species interrelate."



READING WHAT IS WRITTEN IN BONE

Anthropologists at the National Museum of Natural History speak for those who can no longer speak for themselves. "Scientists are story tellers grounded in factual evidence," says Douglas Owsley, the Museum's Division Head for Physical Anthropology. "Using advanced forensic techniques and visual bone examinations, we can tell who a person was, how they lived, what they ate, and, ultimately, how they died." The Division's world-renowned team of scientists, including Owsley and Douglas H. Ubelaker, conduct anthropological excavations to gather the physical evidence needed for their research in the lab. Based on archaeological excavations in Virginia and Maryland, the Division's current work focuses on Colonial America, including an examination of the lives of indentured servants, slaves, and peoples not necessarily represented in history books. Through bones, the unadulterated story of a time and a people come to life.

PROTECTING AMERICA'S PORTS

In protecting America's ports, our most effective weapon is often a microscope. Working in conjunction with the National Museum of Natural History and its vast insect collection, Museum scientists and colleagues at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Systematic Entomology Laboratory identify crop pests and invasive insects that arrive on American shores in shipments of produce, wood, and other commodities. Without proper identification, these pests can cost the nation's farmers billions of dollars and wreak havoc on America's ecosystem. "We are the first line of defense," says USDA's M. Alma Solis. "If a shipment of apples from overseas has a known pest that the country of origin says is harmless, we must accurately identify that species' characteristics." Safeguarding the ecosystem is just one example of how scientists across federal agencies partner with Museum staff and use our collections for the public good.

STIMULATING CURIOSITY, AWAKENING MINDS

The National Museum of Natural History is one of the largest classrooms in the world. Awakening young minds to science, nurturing the spark of curiosity, prompting the desire to know more — Museum educators use every medium to engage visitors with questions of how we know what we know. The answers promote scientific literacy, make America more competitive in a time of rapid technological change, and prepare individuals to better care for the planet we share.

The millions of visitors who tour the Museum in person can get eye-to-eye with insects and entice butterflies to land on their fingers. Our Discovery Room and the future learning center offer a hands-on approach to learning, using objects from the collections to make science and its processes real to young learners.

MAKING SCIENCE COME ALIVE

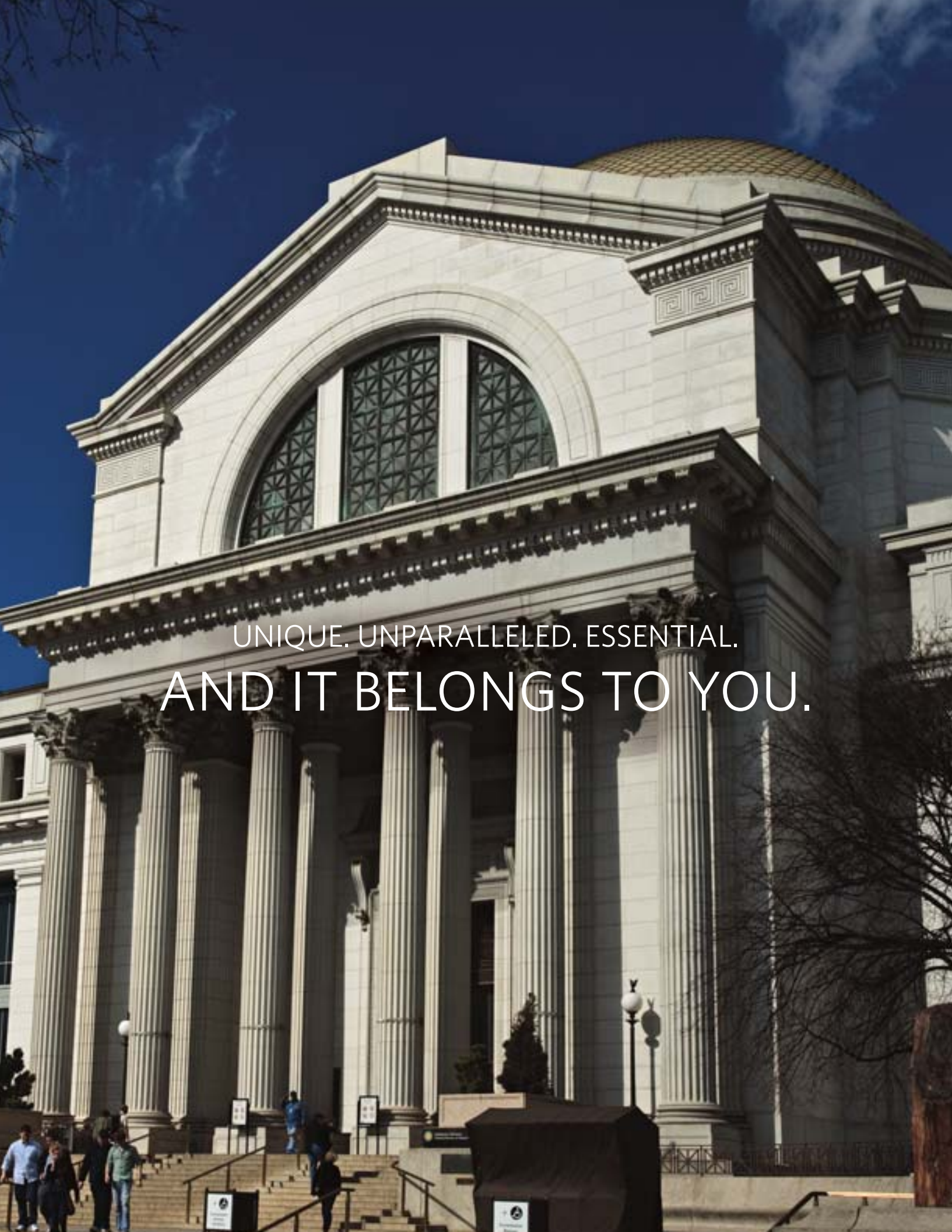
Our public programs reach deep into schools and communities while innovations in technology let tens of millions of online visitors experience the Museum and shape their own stories of the natural world. A trusted source of scientific information, we create materials for America's teachers that illustrate how science is fundamental to societal concerns such as environmental sustainability and human health.

Through fellowships, internships, and programs for visiting students and scientists, the Museum offers many opportunities for scholars worldwide to work with our renowned researchers in every field of the natural sciences.

From pre-schoolers to post-doctoral fellows, we educate tomorrow's scientists and inspire the environmental stewards of the future. The health of our planet — our very future — depends on them.

The National Museum of Natural History is one of the largest science classrooms in the world.

EDUCATION


UNIQUE. UNPARALLELED. ESSENTIAL.
AND IT BELONGS TO YOU.

COME AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!

WE SHOWCASE the splendors and mysteries of the natural world and the achievements of human civilizations. **WE ADVANCE** the mission of the Smithsonian Institution and help improve the quality of life through a comprehensive program of scientific research. **WE HELP** bring the wonders of science alive for students of all ages. **WE COLLECT** and preserve a library of nature and culture for the benefit of generations to come. **WE PARTICIPATE** in a global, scientific community and collaborate across science disciplines. **WE SHOW** why stewardship of irreplaceable natural resources is a global imperative.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
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National Museum of Natural History

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